



Rep. Rick Larsen
WASHINGTON'S SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VETERANS APPEALS IMPROVEMENT AND MODERNIZATION ACT

On August 23, 2017, the *Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act* became law. The new law is also called the *Appeals Modernization Act*. As a result of its passage, veterans have three new options for review.

Option 1: Higher-level Review

- Claim is reviewed by a more senior adjudicator and involves:
 - a new look at the decision
 - no submission of new evidence is allowed
 - the potential for a new outcome based upon
 - differences of opinion
 - unmistakable error

Option 2: Supplemental Claim Lane

- You can submit or identify new evidence to support your claim. VA will provide assistance in the development of evidence.

Option 3: Appeals to the Board

- Appeal directly to the Board of Veterans' Appeals through one of three pathways:
 - **direct review:** no new evidence, without a hearing
 - **evidence submission:** new evidence, without a hearing
 - **hearing:** evidence and testimony

Frequently Asked Questions:

- **When did VA begin to offer these three new "lane" options?**
 - These options were made available in February 2019. In the meantime, VA continues to issue regulations, train employees, adjust IT systems and revise forms to fully implement by August 2020.
- **Which option is right for me?**
 - If you have additional evidence, use the supplemental claim option. (Option 1)
 - If you believe the claim processor made a clear error, request review by a senior VA employee. (Option 2)
 - You can also request the Board of Veterans' Appeals to review your claim. (Option 3)
- **How will this make VA more efficient?**
 - Veterans previously waited up to seven years for some appeals to be resolved. In the future, veterans can expect a much quicker resolution
- **How will pending legacy appeals be addressed?**
 - VA is committed to addressing an existing inventory of legacy appeals. VA identified two opt-in options for legacy appeals, both of which are included in the *Appeals Modernization Act*.
- **How does the reform of appeals relate to VA modernization?**
 - The purpose of modernization is to simplify veterans' interactions with VA. The *Appeals Modernization Act* provides more options to veterans to meet their needs more quickly.

More Questions?

- Call 1-800-827-1000
- Reach out to a local VA regional office.
- Contact your VA accredited representative for more information on appeals.
- Visit benefits.va.gov.

Veterans currently in the legacy appeals process who receive a Statement of the Case or Supplemental Statement of the Case post-February 2019 will be eligible to opt-in to the VA modernization process.

NEED MORE INFO?

If you have questions about the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act, please contact my casework staff at 425-252-3188.